

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 00813 092158Z

62

ACTION EB-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-10 NSCE-00 NSC-07 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 FAA-00

DOT-00 PRS-01 SP-01 DRC-01 /051 W

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O R 092004Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7144

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0813

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN PFOR BB TD

SUBJ: DIALOGUE ON CARIBBEAN AIRLINE RIGHTS

REFS: A) POS 1013 B) POS 1014 C) BTN 811

1. FURTHER TO REF (C), FOLLOWING EMB THOUGHTS OFFERED. IT IS CLEAR THAT PM WILLIAMS' POSITION PLACES USG IN DIFFICULT POLICY BIND WITH REGARD TO ROUTES. BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT AND ROUTE RIGHTS FOR ICA TO U.S. (BEING DISCUSSED WITH GOB DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEK) CONTINUE TO BE IMPORTANT GOB POLICY GOAL AND BASIC FACTOR IN HARMONIOUS USG-GOB BILATERAL RELATIONS. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT USG NEGOTIATIONS ON ROUTE RIGHTS FOR BARBADOS (WHICH ARE ACADEMIC ANYWAY UNTIL ICA MEETS U.S. CRITERIA ON OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL) SHOULD NOT RPT NOT BE PREJUDICED BY GOTT'S CONCERN FOR BWIA, UNLESS GOB SHOWS NEW INTEREST IN CONCEPT OF BWIA AS REGIONAL CARRIER, WHICH IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY DESPITE INCREASED REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH CARICOM.

2. WHILE IDEA OF BWIA AS REGIONAL CARRIER HAS HAD APPEAL TO
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PAGE 02 BRIDGE 00813 092158Z

MANY, NOT INCLUDING PM BARROW OF BARBADOS, AT ONE TIME OR

ANOTHER IN PAST, PM WILLIAMS' IMPLICATION THAT IF ANY NEW ROUTES ARE GRANTED TO US FROM EASTERN CARIBBEAN THEY SHOULD BE FOR BWIA AS REGIONAL CARRIER RATHER THAN TO ICA COME TOO LATE IN THE DAY, PARTICULARLY IF BWIA HAS NOT FORMALLY REQUESTED SUCH ROUTES. PM BARROW'S RESENTMENT TOWARDS TRINIDAD FOR TAKING OVER BWIA FOLLOWING DEMISE OF WEST INDIES FEDERATION, RATHER THAN OFFERING BWIA TO ALL GOVERNMENTS AS REGIONAL AIRLINE THEN, IS STILL STRONG HERE AND IS REASON FOR CREATION OF ICA. EVEN IF THERE WERE WILLINGNESS IN EASTERN CARIBBEAN TO HAVE BWIA AS REGIONAL CARRIER, NONE OF TERRITORIES HAS FUNDS TO PUT UP AS ITS SHARE OF PARTICIPATION. DESPITE WIDE INTEREST IN EASTERN CARIBBEAN IN TAKING OVER LIAT WHEN BWIA PUT IT UP FOR SALE IN 1972, THIS IDEA STALLED FOR LACK OF FUNDS. GOB HAS NOT EVEN HAD MONEY TO PURCHASE CONTROLLING INTEREST IN ICA SO FAR, AS WILLIAMS CORRECTLY POINTS OUT. IN ANY CASE, VIABILITY OF BWIA AS REGIONAL CARRIER WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF JAMAICA MAY BE QUESTIONABLE ANYWAY. IF AIR JAMAICA IS FINDING GOING ROUGH NOW, AS REPORTED IN PRESS THIS WEEK, AND IF GOJ'S INTEREST IN REGIONAL CARRIER WERE REVIVED, THIS COULD CHANGE PICTURE.

3. SINCE WILLIAMS DOES SEEM TO HAVE VALID POINT IN STRESSING BWIA'S UNCOMPETITIVE POSITION WITH RESPECT TO EASTERN AND AMERICAN AIRLINES, MOST SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO ALL CONCERNED MIGHT BE GRANTING OF NEW ROUTE RIGHTS TO BOTH BWIA AND ICA. OTHERWISE, EASTERN AND AMERICAN AIRLINES CAN EXPECT TO FACE OPERATING DIFFICULTIES AT THIS END.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, AIRLINES, AIR ROUTE APPLICATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRIDGE00813
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740113-0727
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740562/aaaacdgu.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: A) POS 1013 B) POS 1014 C) BTN 811
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 SEP 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <06 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIALOGUE ON CARIBBEAN AIRLINE RIGHTS
TAGS: ETRN, PFOR, BB, TD, US, BWIA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005